

BUILDING COMMUNITY: Numerous Duxbury citizens are heading up the project for the latest Habitat for Humanity house to be located on Congress Street. Pictured are (l to r): Linda Vonlderstein, Cubby Fitts, Eileen Dillon, Chris Barry, Marilyn Murphy and daughter Elizabeth, Bill Campbell, Gary Leaverton and Don Hick.

Building a Solid Foundation

Town prepares for second Habitat home

By KEITH L. MARTIN

One does it to honor his late brother, one to promote affordable housing and yet another to do a small part to help someone they've never met.

No matter the reason, over a dozen Duxbury residents and many more to follow will work together over the coming months as the town prepares to construct its second affordable home through Habitat for Humanity.

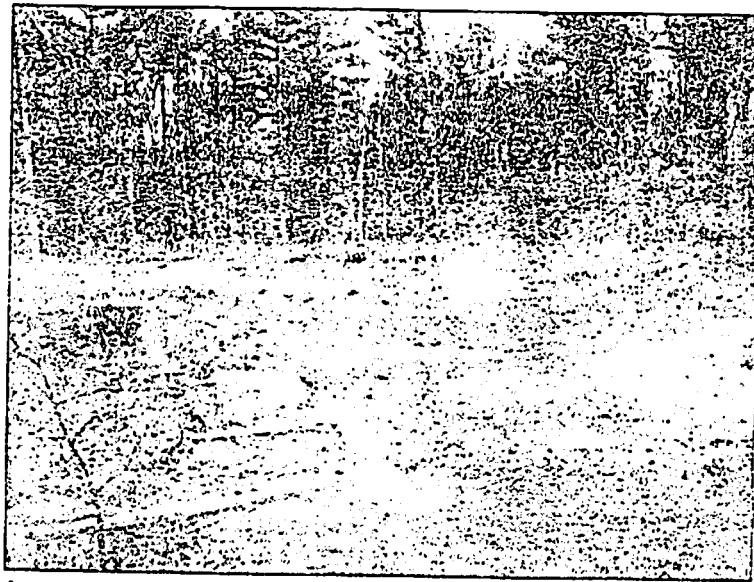
"Working on a Habitat house is the most gratifying thing ever," said Diane Alongi, chairwoman of the Duxbury Project Committee. "People can get involved working at the site, as a financial donor, help in supplying goods or food, so there are various ways to become a part of this, depending on their time commitment."

In June 2002, Special Town Meeting voters approved the purchase of just

over 13 acres of land on Congress Street to use for open space and affordable housing. Last November, selectmen signed and executed a 99-year lease agreement between the town and South Shore Habitat for Humanity. The agreement is to build a single-family home on the land and sell it to a qualified family on the South Shore.

With the land cleared and the organization of volun-

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In mere months, this vacant lot on Congress Street will be a home to a deserving South Shore family thanks to Habitat for Humanity.

Since 1992, South Shore Habitat for Humanity has built 37 homes on the South Shore for 67 adults and 133 children thanks to the work of hundreds of citizen volunteers.

While providing a stable home for a family in need, Hargrove-Perkins said the project also builds community, recruiting volunteers from all walks of life and interests

ation are a number of Duxbury residents, such as Hitty Tom Road's Gary Leaverton, who along with Bianca Road's Chris Barry, is serving as a volunteer coordinator to sign up people for construction and building duties on Saturdays.

For Leaverton, his involvement is due in part to honor his late brother, Lynn, who died last year.

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teers underway, those involved are looking to repeat the success of Duxbury's first Habitat house built in 2001 on Tremont Street.

"We've been working on getting a second home in Duxbury for four years," said Cynthia Hargrove-Perkins, executive director of South Shore Habitat for Humanity. "Land is so valuable on the South Shore and especially in Duxbury, so we've been doing a lot of looking for a buildable parcel...so we are so grateful to the town for identifying a lot."

Another key contribution to construction of the second Habitat house in town came from the Libra Foundation and family and friends of the late Charles M. Werly, a 50-year Duxbury resident.

"I've been contributing to the community with my family for close to 20 years and this is another experience and such a worthwhile activity."

—Bill Campbell

to pitch in for a common cause.

"The community in Duxbury was so dedicated to the first home project," she said. "It's important for more affluent communities in the South Shore to be aware and conscious of people who can't afford to stay in town or...can't afford to buy a home for their children in a safe and decent place to live. There are families falling into homelessness and that's not acceptable."

Working to avoid this situ-

"I'd heard about Habitat before and he was involved with it in Houston, but a person from his group spoke at his funeral and it just stuck in the back of my mind," he said. "When I heard about the opportunity here, I wanted to continue my brother's legacy, so this is my way to give back."

Leaverton, who works as an investigator for an insurance agency, is one of many residents with no real construction experience, but a

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desire to give back and help out a needy family.

Temple Street's Don Hick, retired from his career in financial services, has been involved with Habitat for 25 years and included his children in all the endeavors.

"I wanted my children to understand that there are people in the world less fortunate than us and wanted them early on to learn how to give back to others," said Hick, who is serving as site coordinator to oversee Saturday volunteers.

Bill Campbell, chairman of Duxbury's local housing part-

nership, said his committee is committed to creating more affordable housing in town, but his involvement is strictly as an individual who wants to lend a hand.

"This whole project fits into the scope of what we are concerned about," he said. "I've been contributing to the community with my family for close to 20 years and this is another experience and such a worthwhile activity."

Realtor Cubby Fitts of Brewster Street and King Caesar Road's Linda Vonderstein are involved with the family selection com-

mittee, looking over 60 applications to narrow the field to a handful of finalists to call the finished product their home.

"We both have a passion for this and we'll see it through," said Fitts. "This helps Duxbury, but it also helps those outside our com-

munity who may call the town home soon. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to do a good thing."

First Habitat Homeowner to Lend a Hand

Nearly four years ago, Trudy Martel and her three children got the keys to their new home and a new life following the first Habitat for Humanity project in Duxbury.

Now, as the town prepares to begin construction on its second Habitat house, Martel said she plans to give back to a program that gave her so much.

"I've been waiting for Duxbury to build its second house for almost four years now," said the 17-year resident. "I'm not sure at what capacity I'm going to be involved yet, but I can tell you I plan to show up on some Saturdays and attend some meetings."

Martel said that her own life has changed tremendously since moving into their house on Tremont Street, the first home she has ever owned, thanks to the dedication of over 700 volunteers working tirelessly over nine months.

"It is a lot of work, but the payoff is well worth it," said Martel. "I think I like the security of it the most. I don't have to worry because my kids will always have a home here and I owe a lot of people many thanks for that."

Like all Habitat home recipients, Martel and her family had to dedicate numerous hours to the project, a process she called "uplifting" even though it meant balancing work, raising a family and meeting her requirement to help construct the house.

"I met so many nice people and learned so many things every week," she said. "How many people can say they built parts of their house with their own hands and with lot of help from new friends?"

Martel said that she'd like to see more Habitat homes build on the South Shore, but the main obstacle is getting the land dedicated to build on. She's thankful, however, that the town of Duxbury is leasing the land "so another family can have what I do, thanks to Habitat."

To those unsure whether their contribution can help with the new home, Martel encourages anyone to give what they can to a truly unique program.

"Habitat is an experience that everyone should experience once in their life," she said. "If you volunteer once, you'll agree with me that it is one of the most uplifting spiritual experiences you will ever have in your life. If you are not volunteering because you think that you don't have any skills to offer, or can't help, you are wrong. I did things I never thought I could do."

- KEITH L. MARTIN